

# Introducing 'Champagne', new disease-resistant fig

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The ancient fig tree, first imported to the United States during the 16th century, thrives in areas of California and the South Atlantic and Gulf Coast areas of the U.S. One of the most popular trees grown in Southern backyards, fig is favored for its versatile fruit and low-maintenance production.

Charles E. Johnson, Ed O'Rourke, and James E. Boudreaux, from the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center in Baton Rouge, introduced a new fig they named "Champagne" in a recent issue of [HortScience](#). According to the report, the new fig performed well in grower trials and home orchards. It was selected for public release because of its superior fruiting characteristics. 'Champagne' produces a distinctive fruit when ripe, with a yellow exterior and a unique "gold to caramel" internal color. "This feature should present a marketing opportunity for local outlets", noted the authors.

'Champagne', previously unofficially named and propagated as 'Golden Celeste', was developed by the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station (LAES) to provide a productive, good-quality fruit that ripens during the traditional fig harvesting period (early July in Baton Rouge). The fruit of 'Champagne' is persistent and does not require pollination. 'Champagne' was found to be slightly more resistant to defoliation caused by the [fig](#) leaf rust and leaf spot than 'Celeste'.

The authors noted that one limitation is the tendency of the fruit of 'Champagne' to have a partially closed eye at maturity, which, under

humid conditions, could increase the amount of fruit spoilage compared with 'Celeste'. "However, field notes did not denote a greater tendency for fruit spoilage than other cultivars. When the [fruit](#) is harvested at the proper stage for processing (firm ripe), this should not present a problem", the research concluded.

The LSU AgCenter does not have nursery trees of 'Champagne' available at this time, but limited quantities of dormant cuttings are available for research upon request.

**More information:** The complete study and abstract are available on the ASHS HortScience electronic journal web site:  
[hortsci.ashspublications.org/c ... ontent/full/45/2/310](http://hortsci.ashspublications.org/content/full/45/2/310)

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